

In these chillier winter months, using energy efficiently and affordably to heat our homes is often at the forefront of our minds. But the fuel we use, how it is generated and its effect on global warming remains a major environmental concern. The COP 30 conference last year showed there is still much debate about the practical steps and finance necessary to move significantly away from our reliance on fossil fuels. Where does that leave us as Christians with a responsibility to the environment, not only for ourselves at home but for our churches?

What exactly is a "Carbon footprint?" It's a number, often measured in tonnes or kilograms that represents the total amount of carbon dioxide and other equivalent gases that are associated with the things we do every day, and by the manufacture, transportation and use of the objects we use.

Source BBC Bitesize

Why is it important? Many scientists agree that the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere due to fossil fuel dependence is the leading cause of climate change and global warming today. The current CO2 concentration in our atmosphere is approximately 420 ppm and continuing to rise, which is why considering ways to remove and reduce carbon is so important.

Source Met Office

What's the solution? Solutions on a gigantic scale involving all the countries of the World will be needed but also, we can play our small part in the lifestyle choices and decisions we make in our own lives. Turn to the back page for more information and things to consider.

Take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch



All you need to do is spend one hour between **Fri 23 and Sun 25 Jan 2026** counting the birds you see in your garden, local park or from your balcony. You could even sit in the

churchyard! Then post your results or submit them online.

For more information visit www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch

What can our churches do to reduce their carbon footprint? St Mary's and St Nicholas are required annually to use the Church of England's Energy Footprint Tool. The data collected from this helps us understand our carbon footprint, based on the energy we use to heat and light buildings. As both our churches are heated with a gas boiler, our carbon footprint score is quite high. Solutions to this are not easy as there are many complex considerations. The good news is that there are other things that can, and have been done, to work towards lowering the impact of our carbon footprint.

Recent developments at St Nicholas include

- Replacing an old gas boiler with an A rated appliance
- Switching to a green tariff for our energy
- Replacing old lights with LED bulbs
- Ensuring gutters are cleared to prevent damp patches developing

Target 25 Farmland and Garden Birds

Continuing our series focusing on A Rocha UK's project to help a range of declining species and threatened habitats "Several farmland species that were once common in the UK countryside, such as turtle dove, corn bunting, yellowhammer, and skylark, have become increasingly difficult to see. Loss of habitat, intensive farming, changes in farming practices, pesticides, over-development and climate change are the major contributing factors. This has put increasing pressure on our gardens and many species once common in farmland, are relying on the seeds, fruits and berries that can be found in a typical urban garden."

What can we do?

Support farming initiatives that do not employ intensive methods, for example through buying locally grown produce.

To allow more space for nature means letting your grass grow and leaving some scrub areas (including thistles, nettles and docks).

Create small ponds for wildlife and ensure that there is a good supply of bird food all year round